

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR DISSECTING TISSUE LAYERS

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6.2.2004*
- This is a continuation of application serial no. 09/252,536, filed on February 18, 1999, now abandoned, which*
This is a continuation of co-pending application serial No. 09/107,835, filed on June 30, *now abandoned*
1998, which is a continuation of co-pending application serial No. 08/570,766, filed on
now U.S. Pat. No. 5,772,680,
5 December 12, 1995, which is a continuation-in-part of application serial No. 08/403,012, filed on
now U.S. Patent No. 5,540,711,
March 10, 1995, which is a continuation-in-part of application serial No. 08/388,233, filed on
now U.S. Patent No. 5,780,756,
February 13, 1995, which is a continuation-in-part of application serial No. 08/267,488, filed on
now U.S. Patent No. 5,607,443,
June 29, 1994, which is a continuation-in-part of application serial No. 08/124,283, filed
now U.S. Patent No. 5,736,961,
September 20, 1993, which is a continuation-in-part of application serial No. 08/073,737, filed
10 on June 8, 1993, which is a division of application serial No. 07/893,988, filed on June 2, 1992, *now U.S. Patent No. 6,312,442.*

The disclosures of each of these prior applications are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

Background of the Invention

- 15 This invention relates generally to an apparatus and method for developing an anatomic space for laparoscopic procedures, and more specifically, to an apparatus and method that provides for laparoscopic visualization both during tunneling dissection to the desired anatomic space as well as during subsequent tissue dissection during balloon inflation once the desired potential space has been identified.

- 20 In the past, in developing spaces and potential spaces within a body, blunt dissectors or soft-tipped dissectors have been utilized to create a dissected space which is parallel to the plane in which the dissectors are introduced into the body tissue. This often may be in an undesired